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THREE GENERATIONS, CASE MATERIALS IN LOW INCOME URBAN LIVING.

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ONE IN A SERIES OF STUDIES OF THE CHILD REARING STUDY (CRS) OF LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN WASHINGTON, D.C., THIS BOOKLET PRESENTS CASE MATERIALS TO ILLUSTRATE THE CRS THESIS THAT THERE IS A WIDE VARIABILITY IN BEHAVIOR AND OUTLOOK AMONG THE URBAN POOR, AND SUGGESTS SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CRS FINDINGS FOR PARENT AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE LIVES OF ONE FAMILY ARE NARRATED ANECDOTALLY IN A SOMEWHAT PARALLEL FASHION BY THE GRANDMOTHER, HUSBAND AND WIFE, AND DAUGHTER AND SON. THE MAJOR THEMES WHICH EMERGE FROM THE MATERIAL ARE THE CONSTANT PRESSURES OF ADJUSTMENT TO MEET THE DAILY LIVING NEEDS, THE EFFECT OF THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE ON PARENTAL BEHAVIOR AND EXPECTATIONS, AND THE PRECARIOUS STATUS OF THE LOW-INCOME MALE WITHIN THE FAMILY AND OUTSIDE OF IT. TWO APPENDIXES CONTAIN EXHIBITS OF THE CRS FAMILY RATING SCALES. (NH)

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## THREE GENERATIONS

*Case Materials in Low Income Urban Living prepared by  
Camille Jeffers for the Child Rearing Study sponsored by  
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# THREE GENERATIONS

## Case Materials in Low Income Urban Living

By Camille Jeffers

*This document is based on research materials of the 1960-1964 Child Rearing Study (CRS) of Low Income Families in the District of Columbia. It was prepared by Mrs. Jeffers, then assistant CRS director, as a participant in the group Consultation on Parent and Family Life Programs With Low Income Families, Sub-Committee on Parent and Family Life of the Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, December 2-4, 1964, Washington, D. C. Mrs. Jeffers is now an associate professor at the Atlanta University School of Social Work.*

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October, 1966

## Preface

*Poverty does more than rob one of creature comforts and the right to live with dignity—its thievery can encompass the loss of a brother and father as well.\**

The Child Rearing Study sought to develop clarity about the characteristics and behavior of low income persons and families. Our interest has been in obtaining a picture of their day-to-day life experience through direct field observation.

CRS materials show that families in the low income category in the District of Columbia are not a homogeneous group. Like other categories in our population, they exhibit more significant variability in behavior and outlook on life than frequently has been assumed and asserted. In structure they range from stable two-parent families to unstable one-parent families; in behavior, from the problematic to the exemplary; in emotional tone, from warmth and understanding to indifference and neglect; in education, from illiteracy to college background; and in outlook, from pessimism to optimism. And there are many gradations in between.

The purposes of this paper are (1) to present case materials on a three-generation family in a rather full fashion, and in the subject's own words, in order to illustrate our references to variability in behavior and outlook; and (2) to suggest some of the implications of CRS findings in general, and of these case materials in particular, for parent and family life education.

The case selected is the Burke family,<sup>†</sup> one in which there was a series of 24 field contacts involving observations and interviews over a one-year period. The mother, Mrs. Burke, is the source of the bulk of the field materials on this family. However, the materials include observations of, and responses from a grandmother, Mrs. Nevins (Mrs. Burke's mother), the husband of Mrs. Burke (father of ten of her eleven living children), and some of the children in the household during the field contacts.

The case materials are organized and presented in this detail to let family members themselves, where possible, tell how they see themselves and other family members, what their experiences have been, and what they want for themselves and for other family members.

Hopefully these case materials may provide glimpses, and some insight, into day-to-day demands of low income living and importantly, for our purposes here, the relationship of some of these demands to the establishment of priorities in family living and child rearing.

\* Moss Hart, *Act One*, Signet Books, The New American Library of World Literature, New York, 1960, p. 143.

† See *Appendices*, p. 33.

# THREE GENERATIONS

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## Introduction

*This case study and the weight of the experience of the Child Rearing Study suggest that service programs designed for low income persons and families should proceed from an awareness of the different levels of knowledge, competence, and optimism that exist among them.*

These case study materials are descriptive of some of the ways in which members of this large low income family sought to carry out their family and child rearing responsibilities. Although a single case, it provides insight into situational factors that affect low income living as well as indications of the interplay within families. It hints of reasons for the selective participation of the family in the neighborhood and larger community, and it suggests that any tendencies automatically to equate marginal economic status with personal and group inadequacy—with the assorted negativisms of the day—should give practitioners and students of family life much pause.

Three aspects of these materials on a low income family warrant further comment; they are often overlooked in discussions about low income persons and families. They are indications of (1) the kinds of situations and some of the occasions that harshly force adjustments to the pressures of day-to-day living; (2) the effect of the family life cycle on parental behavior and expectations, especially in relation to children; (3) the precarious position of the low income male, inside and outside of the family.

Wants and wishes aside, the number one priority of Mrs. Burke, and of many families like hers, is food. If there is nearly sufficient food, then clothing comes next in the rank order of actual wants. In her unending struggle to meet these needs Mrs. Burke had to make hard and costly choices—such as keeping the children out of school even though this was not what she wanted to do. CRS' materials show clearly that many low income families are forced to make choices—or for some reason, act in ways—that are incompatible with what they want or say they want.

For example, observe Mrs. Burke's behavior when her daughter Frances became pregnant. The horns of her dilemma were the threatened loss of a household helper if her daughter left on the one hand and, on the other hand, the embarrassment, shame, and costs of having an unwed mother and an illegitimate child in the home. Her decision to take in her daughter and grandchild did not negate the shame and embarrassment she felt over what had occurred.

Many, if not most, low income families find themselves straddling two ways of life as they try, or express the wish

to be able to, meet selected middle class goals but find themselves bogged down and pulled back to "basics" by the demands of daily life.

A related aspect of low income living manifests itself in this and other cases in the kind of compartmentalization of life that frequently results from the pressures of not enough money and its uneven flow. Much of Mrs. Burke's energy and preoccupation is tied up in providing food and clothing for her children and seeing that the household chores for a large family are done. She gives physical care very high priority, so high it sometimes appears to dwarf, if not exclude, everything else. For example, she never gets to work on attempting to set in motion consistent ways of dealing with health problems in the family.

These and other materials give some insight into the reasons why some mothers in low income families—with and without fathers present—function very well in coping with the physical aspects of child care, particularly of young children, but appear to function poorly, or not at all, in other important areas of child care.

The picture given here of this three-generation family also offers clues as to the ways the life cycle affects some low income parents' outlook on life and their child rearing practices. Mrs. Burke's outlook is to some extent colored by her years of hardship and feelings that she is actually worse off now than she was, not only during her childhood, but during the early years of her marriage and child rearing. Her husband, Mr. Burke, at 49, is without the optimism and pride he displayed when he was young and twenty. Mrs. Burke's daughter, Frances, has a "nice apartment" and a car—apparent advances over her grandmother's outhouse and well water; however, the crucial questions are: Will she and her brother, Donald, be able to maintain the optimistic outlook they now have and later see themselves as having shown movement or achieved a modicum of security and satisfaction? Or will the erosion of poverty in time reduce them to their parents' scuffling and near abdication of hope for a better life here for themselves, even if not for their children.

In much of the literature about low income families the father and husband is a shadowy, sometimes non-existent figure. Present or absent, the man's influence (or lack of it for whatever reasons) is an especially critical factor in the low income family. CRS materials indicate that the major problem is not one of educating most low income men to their responsibilities as husband and father; like Mr. Burke, they are too often painfully aware of their responsibilities, and of their inability to meet them adequately and consistently.



## First Generation

*I'm on the begging line and I've been on the begging line the last three years. . . .*

*It's awful when you can't read and write and you are too old and sick to work and you ain't got no food and you ain't got no children who can help you out.*

Mrs. Nevins came to the District of Columbia from South Carolina four years ago when she was 67 years old in order to be near her nine children who had been coming to the District "one-by-one since 1929." She has diabetes and asthma.

She received welfare checks from her home state during her first year of residence but has not been successful in obtaining Old Age Assistance in Washington, D. C. She now lives with one of her daughters who was having difficulty supporting her.

Mrs. Nevins talked freely about her life before coming to Washington and, in particular, about how she brought her children up. Like many of the older generation, she sees the past as much different from today, both in general and as a setting for raising children.

### **Mutual aid:**

When my children were growing up, people used to help each other out more. We did not have to go without food because if one neighbor had something and the other one did not have food, one would give the other neighbor some of their food.

### **Discipline and affection:**

I did not whip my children as much as some parents are whipping their children today. I talked more to my children . . . explaining things to them.

I showed my children that I cared for them and loved them . . . I tried to keep them clean. I also taught them that if they wanted other people to love them, they should behave themselves.

### **Work habits:**

I taught each of my children, the boys and the girls, to keep house and cook . . . if a parent trains their child at home and how to do housework and cook, then that child can go out and get a job. . . . If my children did not do something right I always made them do it over again until they did do the thing right.

### **Educational lacks:**

When my children were coming along the only kind of jobs they could get was jobs in keeping house and cooking. I was



NEVINS — BURKE — JAMISON: THREE GENERATIONS

Legend:

- △ IN HOUSEHOLD MALE
- IN HOUSEHOLD FEMALE
- △ (hatched) NOT IN HOUSEHOLD
- △ (diagonal lines) NOT IN HOUSEHOLD
- △ (cross-hatch) DECEASED
- == MARRIAGE
- ≡≡ EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONSHIP
- SEX UNREPORTED

trying to teach my children to do the type of work they could do without an education.

Times were hard then and I knew I did not have enough money to keep my children in school . . . school only lasted five months so even if the children had gone through school they wouldn't have gotten as much education as children up here are getting today. . . .

Nowadays, if I took care of children I would shove them through high school so they could get a better job.

#### **Ability to face hardship:**

I am 71 years of age and I have lived a long time. I have seen these changes come about. I am trying to struggle along with my troubles but some of these younger parents today are just not understanding that they are living too fast. . . .

They are going so fast they let worries get on their mind. Now I never did let anything worry me too much. I have had two children to die; my husband died. . . . What I'm trying to say is that I came up the hard way. . . .

If a person comes up the hard way when he is a young child, then when he grows up he can take more hardship than those people who come up the easy way. . . . If everything just goes easy for a child, and a child gets out of the parents' control, then that child, when he grows up, will not be able to face hardships. That child will not know what living on his own is like.

#### **Control and correction of children:**

These teenagers today will curse you out. Now when I was coming up, teenagers did not behave this way to adults. I read the Bible a lot and the Bible says, 'Train a child the way you want it to grow up.'

If parents do not correct children, the children will keep on doing what they should not do. In this day and time people think too much of their children to correct them. Nowadays people do not want you to correct their children either.

Times is getting worser now because parents do not control their children. Now I had nine children at home with me at the same time. A neighbor used to tell me how quiet my children were. . . .

People say things in the presence of children that should not be said. We grownups . . . did not say things in the presence of children they should not hear. We did not fuss and fight in the presence of children either.

Now, you can't even correct the children of today. Instead of the mothers correcting their children, it's the children what corrects the parents.

## Second Generation

*I know children need their father and that is why I tried to stay with my husband even though I don't like the way things go between me and him. But I stay with him so my children can have a father. . . .*

Mrs. Burke, the 43-year-old daughter of Mrs. Nevins, has been married 22 years. She came to Washington, D. C., 19 years ago to live with a sister. She had separated from her husband because of his drinking and mistreatment of her; sometimes he would hit her "as hard as God would let him." Her father had encouraged her to separate from her husband.

Mr. Burke followed his wife to Washington after promising his father-in-law to do better and after getting his wife's consent to a reconciliation. The improvement in his behavior was short-lived; yet the Burkes have remained together. Their eleventh child was born during the Child Rearing Study's field contact with them.

Raised by her mother for a life of hardship, Mrs. Burke did not want it that way:

It's a lot of things I wished I could have did. I would like to have seen some parts of the world. I always wished I could travel. That's what I used to think about when I was young.

Switching to the way she saw the facts of life, she added:

I think it's nice for a man [or a woman] to raise a family so when he gets old he can have someone to take care of him. . . . You see these old maids and they don't have anybody to do anything for them.

Mrs. Burke was preoccupied with providing her children with the basic necessities. In this child rearing responsibility she saw herself less fortunate than her mother.

### **Physical care:**

No, this isn't anything like the way we was brought up. We was poor but not this poor. . . .

We had sufficient clothes. My mother took good care of us. But my children don't even know if they are going to get food this day or the next.

I was brought up right. My father was nothing like my husband is to his children. My father tried to take care of my mother and us. When my mother said she wanted some food, my father went out and got it every time she needed it.

### **Parental love:**

My mother and father loved each other and they always got along with each other. My mother looked out for the house and for my father and for all of us. My father did the work and looked out for mother and the rest of us. . . .

I would not call this a close family because . . . my children are just too far apart. They don't cooperate with one another and their father does not cooperate with them or me.

They don't do like we did. When my father came in he would play with us and take us on his lap. But these children's father does not want to do anything but beat the children when he gets drunk. . . . None of these children can climb up in their father's lap.

**Parental example:**

These children really do not get along with one another very well. . . . If one of them says one thing the other one always disagrees. They are ready to fight one another most of the time. Sometimes they act like they've never seen each other before.

I don't know what makes them act like that but they do hear their father fussing with me a lot and maybe they just fuss too. . . .

Now when we were growing up we never did hear our father and mother fussing and arguing. . . . My mother and father never cursed at me.

Me and my brothers and sisters never did fight one another. We disagreed once in a while but we did not fight about it.

**Sharing:**

I think me and my brothers and sisters loved each other more than my children love each other. If I had a nickel and bought some candy I would divide it with my sisters and brothers and if they got anything they would divide it. . . . But my children don't share with one another. Each one of my children just keeps everything for himself.

**Fun and enjoyment:**

It's slavery-like with my own children here because my husband does not want them to have any privileges like other children have. . . . My husband won't let them go to the movies when he comes home from work. He never wants them to watch TV. He gets mad when I give them a penny sometimes to spend and he doesn't want them to have any money at all to spend.

**Mrs. Burke concluded:**

No, I would not change places with my children because I don't think my children are happy.

**A parental look at housing and neighborhood:** The Burkes lived on the first floor of an old house that had been converted into two apartments. Except for the kitchen and bath, the three other rooms were used as bedrooms. One room which was formerly a living room contained two cribs and a double bed; a second room contained one large bed; and the third room which used to be the dining room had one double bed

and one twin bed. The rooms were tidy and the worn floors were waxed and clean.

Mrs. Burke was happy that she had a yard for the children and, although there were some drawbacks in her present housing, she considered this aspect of her present life an improvement over her childhood situation—except for the rent.

**On housing:**

We had four rooms, bungalow-like. . . . There were eleven of us living in that four-room house. Our bath was outside and we had to draw water from the well, so the living conditions here are more convenient.

I'd say that even though my place is overcrowded now, these conditions are better than mine when I was growing up . . . a three room apartment like this one here should have no more than eight people in it.

Another difference is the rents here are higher. We only paid \$5.00 a month there and up here . . . we pay \$75.00.

The Burkes live in a three-block enclave, a block from a main thoroughfare. She liked the fact that her neighbors tried to help each other out when help was needed but she would rather live where there was "less racket and cursing." And there were other housing and neighborhood problems:

**Mrs. B:** Do you smell that awful smell? There's a dead dog up the street and the police have not done anything about it. A neighbor called the police and they told her to call the Health Department. I don't know whether or not anybody called the Health Department but last night that smell was so bad it made us sick in our stomach.

\* \* \*

**Mr. B:** I had to lose a day's pay not so long ago to go to court. That was because there was rats in my yard. Those were not my rats. Those were the rats of the man across the alley; they came into my yard from his yard. . . .

Now this ain't no nice place for us to be living. The rent would be cheaper if we lived in a project. . . . I told her to go down there and apply and try to get in a project but she wouldn't do it.

**Mrs. B:** Why didn't you go yourself?

**Mr. B:** I did go and I put in an application but you ought to go down there too and keep after them so they know we want to live in a project apartment.

Mrs. Burke may have seen her own childhood as happier than that of her children but she did not see her marriage as happier than her mother's.

**A wife's view of marriage:**

She [*her mother*] told me how men are and how a lot of them try to sweet talk you and then do no good . . . how some men try to put things over on you.

I was 18 years old when I learned about marriage. It was then my mother told me not to be messing around with a man who drinks. But then I got myself all tangled up with this man of mine.

I don't know why, but my husband was the only man I could care for. I knew he drank but it looked like to me he liked me a lot. And when he did drink he showed that he respected himself and me.

My mother told me to try to get a respectable husband and my husband tried to be respectable and he was the one I fell for.

In her description of her life with her husband, fear and violence intermingle with protectiveness, concern, and resignation to it all.

**Fussing and fighting:**

I used to call the police every night. . . . He was put in jail three times last year. . . .

One night when I was asleep he choked me. . . . I wouldn't tell the hospital doctor that he choked me because I was afraid they might do something to him. . . . I felt that maybe he feels like I do: I like to be around the children and I thought maybe he wants to be around the children too.

But he does scare me terribly. . . . One night I woke up and he was standing over me with a baseball bat saying 'I'm going to kill you.' The children heard him and began to scream and holler and cry. They ran out of the house. . . .

When I cry, the children cry. . . .

Now, when he bothers me at night, I just get up and fight straight back.

**Drinking:**

My husband was out of work two days this week and two days last week. He is drunk again. I hope he don't lose his job this time. . . . This is the kind of thing he did before he lost his other job. . . .

He got better for a little while but now he's getting like he was before. Now he is drunk every night.

When he starts drinking like that he talks crazy . . . does not remember things he says or does.

Sometimes I wonder if he really means it when he says he is going to kill me. . . . He seldom says anything like that when he is sober.

When he is drunk and carrying on the way he does, it makes the children nervous and I try to keep them from hearing the awful things he says. . . .

I just kept thinking that maybe he would get better as he gets older.

**Need for a father:**

I think everybody should get married and have a family. . . . I wouldn't give anything for my children. . . . I like being around my children and I like my children being around me.

\* \* \*

I know children need their father and that is why I tried to stay with my husband even though I don't like the way things go between me and him. But I stay with him so my children can have a father. . . .

\* \* \*

He never takes care of the children. He tells me they are my children and I should take them with me if I am going any place else. . . . He will never stay home and keep the children for me. He never tries to do anything for the children. . . . I don't care how sick they are, he never goes to them and he refuses to take care of them.

\* \* \*

It takes both of us to raise children. He curse at them and you know what it is these days if a father curses his children; the children are not going to like him. Kenneth hates his father. . . . My oldest son hates him too. That is why he left this house. . . .

I tell my husband, 'When you get old and can't do for yourself these children will hate you so much that they won't even give you a drink of water.'

\* \* \*

But I must say the children's father do like this baby here [Bertram]. My husband says this baby looks more like him than any of the other children. He seems to like this baby more than he does any of the other children. Sometimes he will pick this baby up and hug him but that is the only one of my children my husband seems to pay any attention to.

\* \* \*

You know my husband doesn't have any use for girls so he was real happy that the [newborn] baby [Carl] is a boy and looks like him.

**Need for a husband:**

My husband's best time of life looked like when he was in his 20's. He was more proud of himself. He would fix himself up and keep himself neat . . . but now that he is getting bald he won't fix himself up at all. He does not care much how he looks and he was just the opposite when he was twenty.



It's funny—you and your husband have many things which upset you and you have your ups and downs, but you just can't do without that husband. . . . These people who don't have a man seem to go off in the head. I think they go crazy because they don't have a man to satisfy them. . . . A woman is a man's companion so I think that a person just gets unhappy or unsatisfied when they don't have a man or a woman to share things with.

**Bearing up:**

It's up to God if some of us suffer more than others, I think. That's what my mother taught me. . . .

If I did not believe in God, I don't think I would have been able to make out the way I have all of these years. God has helped me when I have prayed for his help. . . . I'm not one of those people who go to church all the time but I sure does sit here and pray all the time.

**The man in the house:** The job which Mr. Burke had lost because of his drinking was a porter's job with a pharmaceutical company at \$60.00 a week. After a period of unemployment, he started earning \$52.00 a week at a chain restaurant as a kitchen worker. His total monthly income was considerably less than a public assistance budget for a family the size of his.

As Mr. Burke talks about himself, bits of bravado and belligerence are matched by words of self-depreciation and intimations that he feels some isolation from his family.

**Work:**

I like best in a man the way he carries himself. He should keep clean and neat and he should talk right and do right by his family. Yes, a man should take care of his family and work and bring some money in and give it to them the way I do.

I am 49 years old and I still feel like a young man. I am in pretty good health except I have pyorrhea of the gums. . . .

I got a lot of pep and that is why I work so hard. I keep working. I just work all the time. I don't never sit down much. I just like to be working and busy.

**Marriage responsibility:**

Me and my wife was engaged at least two years before we got married. I waited two years to give myself time to think. . . .

I married my first wife when I was 22 years old and she died of galloping consumption. I had three sons by my first wife and I sure do like those boys.

There's not really anything a father needs to or has to tell a boy about marriage. That boy should find it all out for himself. Didn't nobody tell me nothing about marriage. I learned it all on my own. . . . I knowed I had to take care of my family and I'm working now and holding up to it. . . .

I ain't got no education but I do have a lot of mother wit and I know that there ain't nothing no more important to a woman than a man.

**A wife's duty:**

A woman should be a good cook and keep the house clean. My wife is a good woman. She keep this house very clean. I've got to give her credit for that. She is always here when I come home too. She doesn't mess around with another man. Yes she is a good woman and she sure does try to do right.

**Male prerogatives:**

I am the man in this house and I'm not supposed to be responsible for taking care of these children and working too.

I'm a working man and I go to my job every day. I don't have time to be around here with these children.

Nobody's got anything to do with how much I drink. I do drink and that's all there is to it. I work, too. I bring money in this house. I get out of here every day except Monday and go to work. . . . I don't spend my money on liquor now. My friends give me all the liquor I want. I never do spend money on liquor any more.

**Sharing the load:**

[*To his wife*]: You ought to be out there working, helping to get some money yourself. Plenty of women with children work. The big girls could take care of the others.

[*About his 13-year-old-son*]: I brought him up this far and now he is old enough to help take care of himself. I believe in children helping to take care of themselves as soon as they are old enough.

**Perception of status in the family:**

You [*his wife*] always tell these children what to do. You don't let me get a word in. They come to you for everything.

Nobody in this house ever done anything for me. I give you all my money. I am always giving you my money. . . .

Nobody in this house ever gives me nothing. You even give that brother of yours more than you give me. You bring him in here and feed him and I keep telling you not to be giving him our food.

**The persistence of hunger:** At one time Mrs. Burke had done domestic work to augment their income but she stopped after a hernia operation. After she had to stop work, she chided her husband for not finding a second job. Management of the limited income was difficult particularly when her husband spent some of his earnings on drink. He got two meals on his restaurant job and that helped some as she only had to worry about food for herself and the children so long as he

held that job. Her 24-year-old son Donald, who worked at a city market, gave her some help; her 13-year-old son Kenneth shared his weekend earnings at the city market; and nine-year-old Harold was willing to share the tips he got from carrying groceries at a neighborhood supermarket.

We just find it hard to get along on \$52.00 a week. We budget the money but we have to pay part of our rent every other week . . . \$37.50.

On those weeks he has only \$9.50 to give me for food for the family because he has to take \$5.00 a week for carfare to get to his job.

Other weeks he pays \$15.00 on the gas and light bill and that leaves me only \$32.00 to take care of everything else in the home for that week and the next week too. . . .

It just keeps me with a headache when I try to manage.

Of course, my husband he do work, but I really think I take more part in taking care of the children. After all, when he don't have no money I'm the one who scrambles around and gets some food for the children. . . .

My husband don't want to go out and ask for help but I'd rather go and ask people for food than hear my children crying for bread.

Mrs. Burke's recurrent plea for food for her children became more acute and plaintive after her oldest sons' induction into the army. Hunger was chronic in the Burke household.

**"Bellies full of wind":**

My husband only gave me \$2.00 week before last and that is all the money he has given me in the last two weeks. I don't even have food in the house this minute and I have only had a very little bit of food in the house all week long.

The children and me are sitting here without a bit of food in this house right now. I don't even have milk for the baby.

Last night none of us had dinner . . . here Thanksgiving is coming and I don't have a drop of food in the house.

All we have to eat is eggs sometimes and vegetables and the bread I make.

I sit here and cry to think that I am sitting up here pregnant and hungry and they got my son in the Army. . . .

**Loss of a breadwinner:**

The Army folks don't want to give me an allotment from Donald because Donald was not staying here in the home when he went in the Army. But Donald was my onliest help excusing my husband. . . . He helped me out with a few dollars every week. He also bought some clothes for the children and each week he brought some food and things like that to us.

Since Donald has been in the Army I have not been able to buy meat. He would give me meat when he was working but since he has been gone we only have chickens on Sunday.

It is a shame for the government to take a person away from the mother and that person has been helping the mother out and then not let the son send the mother an allotment.

My son has been gone seven months now and here I sit without even a penny. . . . I get so mad about my son being gone and me without the help he was giving me. . . . He has been sending me \$10.00 a month. That does help some but you know that ain't very much when you think of the size of my family.

**And later:**

My son did not get the allotment for me but since he got promoted in the army he sends me \$20.00 a month . . . and that will sure help.

**"Scrambling around" for food:**

A lady gave me some food and lent me a dollar. I took the dollar and bought some flour and lard and that helped some. I ran out of milk and my cousin bought two car tokens from me for 50 cents. I took the 50 cents and bought some milk for the baby.

I am too weak [*eight months pregnant*] to get up and get out of the house to get food for the children so I have to send the children out to see what they can do.

**Mrs. B:**

[*About applying for Surplus Food*]: I am sick and I couldn't go, plus I didn't even have the carfare. . . . He [*Mr. Burke*] just won't go. He told me there was no use going down there because he wouldn't know what to tell the people. I told him all he had to do was to go down there and tell them what the family situation is and how much money you are making. He said that I could talk better than he can to them and so he just wouldn't go.

**Mr. B:**

I been down there a whole lots of times and they don't pay no attention to me when I go. The last time I was down there they told me they couldn't give me no more food because I was working.

**Mrs. B:**

You haven't ever been down there.

**Mr. B:**

Yes I have too. That time I didn't have a job I went there more than once. I went there all of the time and you're the one who never goes down there.

**Mrs. B:**

[*Three months later*]: It looks like when I get my little money

I have to spend it for other things. I don't keep out carfare to go down to Surplus Food. . . . But I guess I will have to go down there. What I can't understand is why the government won't let my son send me an allotment.

**What it would take:**

If I had \$75.00 I would be able to buy food and clothes for myself and the eight children. . . . I would take \$25.00 or \$35.00 and spend it for groceries and I would take the other and get clothing for me and the children.

Now the \$75.00 would not include the rent, gas and light bill. . . . This month I would get \$35.00 worth of clothing and \$40.00 worth of food. Next month I would get \$40.00 worth of clothing and \$35.00 worth of food.

For one month I would buy twenty pounds of flour and I would get me \$1.50 worth of fat meat and 50 or 75 pounds of potatoes and other things like that.

I would get my heavy things first and make sure I had my bread and meat. I don't know if I would get sweet milk but I would get butter and some milk to make my bread.

**Child rearing priorities and behavior contrasts:** In the Burke home there was little money and many child rearing demands.

One keynote of Mrs. Burke's mothering behavior and admonitions was the material and moral value of work.

**On work:**

If you learn a child when he is young, he will always want to work. Now when I was 13 I was working for a white lady. I always wanted to work. I was happy when I was working. . . .

Working keeps children's minds off stealing things. When they learn how to work when they are young, then they learn how to get money if they work for it. And then they won't want to steal.

The "model" child among her children was Donald, her 24-year-old son. Donald was born prior to her marriage to Mr. Burke; she gave him her maiden name. Donald was anemic and required considerable care when he was an infant. Possibly as a result she "petted him all his life." Donald was different from the other children, he liked to stay at home with her and talk while they liked to spend more time outside the home. Mrs. Burke developed a closeness with him that made his leaving to go into service so difficult for her that she thought she did not want to get that close to any of her other children. She talked a great deal about Donald and about the help he had been to her.

**Household help:**

Donald did a wonderful job in helping me out here in the home and in doing for the other children.



He used to scrub the floors and keep them very clean, especially his own room. He used to wash his clothes when he was eleven. . . . When he was nine he could go to the store and knew how to count his change.

Days that I was feeling bad he would fix breakfast for me and also help out in getting the other children ready for school.

**Working to help:**

He has been working at the market since he was twelve years old. . . . He used to work at the same place [*pharmaceutical laboratory*] that my husband had worked and they also said how smart he was down there. They told him he should stay out there and keep working there but he wanted to work in the market because it was regular work and the work out at the laboratory was not regular work.

At the laboratory they said he was so smart he should have a job sitting down and not a job walking around and working at a market.

Donald always told me he would never get married as long as I am living. . . . I told him he should get married to a good wife but he told me 'No.' He wanted to help me out and he would not get married for that reason.

**A family void:**

Donald was just like a father to the children. He would give them show fare and a little money once in a while and the children loved him. . . .

Kenneth was sick when he [*Donald*] went into the Army. He sits with his head hanging down. He don't have nothing to say to nobody. I look at him and my eyes fill up. . . .

Frances just feels awful about it. . . .

Ain't nothing for us to do but just lose our minds.

**Followers in Donald's footsteps:**

Frances was smart too when she was a baby and she always was smart. She helped me out all of the time in the house and she learned to cook real well. . . .

She was kind of like Donald. She was interested in the house and trying to keep it clean. She was about twelve when she started cleaning up her room and keeping the floors in the house clean. She was about 14 when she got a little evening job after school cleaning up for a lady. . . .

She is a very nice person and she gets along well with the other children.

Now Kenneth [*age 13*] loves to work and he has been working since last year. . . . He enjoys buying himself something and I let him do that so he can learn he can get things he needs and wants when he works for the money. . . .

He was offered another job which would have paid him \$10.00 a day but I told him not to take it because it might not have lasted long. . . .

I didn't think it made sense to stop a good job and take a chance on one he didn't know anything about.

Harold [age 9] can take care of the baby and the smaller children and he knows how to and can keep them quiet. He can do more with the other children than any of the bigger children can do. He can make his own bed, he sweeps the floor, and he takes out the trash. . . .

. . . if Harold makes any money at the Safeway he is going to run out and turn the money over to me. If he makes a quarter, he will give me fifteen cents. He gives me money just as Donald used to do.

The negative "model child" among her children was 16-year-old Evelyn. Evelyn had just quit school when the CRS observations began. Though Mrs. Burke did not approve of Evelyn's decision to drop out of junior high school, there were still things that Evelyn could do: She could help at home with the housework and children and she could get a job to help out with household expenses. But Evelyn was not like Donald.

You can't depend on Evelyn. . . . She washes and irons her own clothes and she does that very well but she can't cook. She burns up everything. I tried to teach her to cook but it looks like she can't or don't want to understand how to cook. Anything she don't want to do, she don't try to do. . . .

When I tell her to do something she just won't do it. She never minds me. . . . I whip her sometimes; then she will help out around the house for a couple of days and then she stops again and just sits around. . . .

I just don't know what to do with her. So I just go and do the housework and the cooking and everything else myself. I just leave her alone most of the time. . . . I get tired of trying to tell her and make her do. I get tired of whipping her too.

#### **Inconsistencies in Evelyn's baby-sitting behavior:**

She doesn't like the small children and at times she is really mean to them. She will hit them very hard and yell at them. She never talks nice to them. I have a lot of trouble with her. . . . She looks to me as if she hates the children. She can take care of them but when she does she is real mean to them.

[Yet when Mrs. Burke was in the hospital]: I am proud of how good Evelyn did with the children and the house while I was gone [to the hospital for child birth]. She took care of all the children real well. . . . She cooked, washed and ironed for herself and the other children and she made sure that they go to school and she just did everything fine. She surprised me with how good she was.



**Bafflement of mother:**

I never knowed none of them to get angry at me but Evelyn. . . .

I just don't understand why she is so selfish. She didn't take it after me or my people 'cause none of my family are selfish like that. She must take it from my husband's side of the family.

Beatrice can go to the store and carry out the trash and sweep the floor but she is like Evelyn. . . .

That Beatrice is going to be another Evelyn. She is just as stubborn as Evelyn and she is going to keep on being just as stubborn as she can be. I don't understand her either.

Mrs. Burke and Mr. Burke join Mrs. Burke's mother in expressions of some sense of helplessness in dealing with the children of today. All the adults in the household refer to influences and developments beyond their control that operate to diminish parents' control and understanding.

**Mrs. B:**

Children are too grown nowadays. They are just like men and women. . . . Children know more than I do, that is, some of them do. You can't tell them much because they already know a lot of things while they are still little. . . .

They hear grownups cursing and swearing at them and the children just swear back at these grown people. I'm telling you, this is something nowadays—trying to bring these children up right.

The way things are now you can't raise children by yourself. You need help in raising them.

Children come into the world wiser than they used to be. It is just like it says in the Bible: Children will be born wiser and weaker.

Now when I was twelve or 13 I didn't know where a baby came from. When we were children we were told a doctor brought the baby in a basket. Now, I think you just have to be more truthful with children because they are just born wiser.

**Mr. B:**

Nowadays you can't tell kids anything. They don't listen to anybody and they think they know it all. . . .

I think TV brings on a lot of what they learn and are learning. This TV is no good for them. It causes so many deaths. . . .

Kids see so many killings on TV it makes them want to kill too. Shucks, a killing ain't nothing nowadays.

I don't think kids ought to be allowed to watch so much TV. I got some kids who just sit there all day long and do nothing but watch TV.

All of Mrs. Burke's interests in her children were not related to what she saw as to her need to teach them how to do household chores. For example, she spoke on one occasion about how she was already planning ahead for the absorption of the expected baby into the family:

I love this baby [*Bertram—age 1*]. I am going to try to keep him from getting jealous when the new baby is born. . . . Me and my mother and Frances was talking about it. What I plan to do is to lay the new baby down when I give him or her the bottle. I am going to put the new baby on the bed and give him or her the bottle and I'm going to hold this baby in my lap at the same time. I think that if I don't hold the new baby much and keep on holding this baby what I have, the same as I have always been doing, then maybe he won't be jealous of the new baby.

I'm going to let him know that the new baby is his too and I'm going to keep on holding him and hugging him as I have been doing.

**The educational deficit:** Mr. Burke, according to his wife, could neither read nor write. Mrs. Burke claimed an eighth grade education for herself; yet she had Frances write the letters for her that she sent to her son in the Army. Mrs. Burke's mother was apparently right when she said that her children had not learned much in the five-month school years of their South Carolina youth.

Mrs. Burke showed an interest in her children's education, and she thought some of them were especially apt and interested in school. She expressed dissatisfaction about the quality of education that they were getting in their present school. She compared what they were getting there with what they had gotten in a previous school:

They don't learn much at this school . . . and they don't have as much manners and respect for other people as they did when they were going to the other school.

When the children went to \_\_\_\_\_ school over near \_\_\_\_\_ Street they lived to go to school every day. They never wanted to be out of school, but over here they don't want to go to school some days. They liked the teachers better and they say that they learned more when they were over there.

She had other practical expectations of the school, for example, as in the case of her quarrelling six-year-old twins:

They fight all the time. When they get to school they will learn not to fight each other.

Mrs. Burke's school problems with her children covered the spectrum of the school career—entering school, attending

school, and leaving school. These school problems were intricately related to the family's level of living.

**Entering school:**

In a way I am glad that the children are going to school and in another way I am not glad. I'm not glad because they don't have clothes to wear. . . .

I know the twins are six years old now but they don't have clothes and they can't go to school this term but I will try to send them to school in January.

I think this will be all right because the lady who comes to see me from the school said it is after a child is seven years old it is against the law to keep the child out of school. . . .

The lady from the school carried me downtown and bought five pair of shoes. She asked me if she could get some clothes for the children would I send them to school. I said I would. . . . I don't even have sweaters for my kids.

Elsie is seven and she is still in the first grade. She did go to school last year but she only went three months.

**Attending school:**

Even though Geneva and Kenneth were hungry and did not have anything to eat, they went to school today just the same. But Elsie said she would rather stay home from school.

Last year the truant officer was here because I didn't send the children to school. I didn't send the children to school because there was no food in the house and I didn't want them to have to go to school hungry and come home hungry too.

I felt that if I kept them home with me at least when they cried and asked for a piece of bread I would be with them to put my arms around them.

If the children were not going to school I would just cook one meal a day and that meal would do for the whole day . . . but now that the children are in school I do have to give them something for lunch . . . if I have any food in the house.

**Leaving school:**

Donald [age 24] stopped school in the eighth grade because we didn't have food in the house and he also wanted a little money to spend. He said he wanted to stop school and go to work and help the family and that's what he did.

Frances [age 18] used to work at the restaurant where my husband is working now. She was working and going to school. . . .

Frances was in the ninth grade in school when she got pregnant.

The reason Evelyn [age 16] says she wants to work is so that she can buy herself some nice clothes. She said she just ain't got the clothes she need to go to school in. . . .

The other day I bought her a shirt for her to wear back to school, but she won't even use it.

Evelyn's leaving school occasioned protest from members of the family but none were successful in getting Evelyn to return to school.

**Grandmother:** I try to tell her that she will regret not going to school to learn things that will help her get a better job.

**Mother:** I think Evelyn will be sorry she refuses to go back to school. I could push her and force her to go back to school if I wanted to but I don't think this is the thing for me to do because if I try to force her to go back she won't study anyway. So I just told her it is her own decision she is making and that she will be sorry she will not go back to school.

**Evelyn's sister, Frances, who wanted to be a nurse:**

I told her [Evelyn] she should go to the counselor there at school and ask for a job. Other teenagers get jobs and go to school, too. So I told her she should stay in school. I wanted to stay in school but I had to come out. Now I'm very sorry that I had to come out and I wish I could have finished. But Evelyn don't have to make the same mistake I did.

Conditioned to hunger at home and in school and to a lack of the proper clothing for school, the younger children in the family react in different ways.

**Geneva, age 12:**

I like school a whole lot. I am in the 5th grade now.

**Harold, age 9:**

I like the work in school and I like to learn.

**Beatrice, age 6:**

I am getting my shoes so I can go to school and that makes me happy. Now when I get in school, if I have to stay away from school a lot of times or a long time, then I'm going to write my teacher a note and I'm going to tell my teacher that I can't come to school because I ain't got no clothes.

**Health and health problems:** The Burke family consistently went without medical treatment for adults and children. Mrs. Burke had never had a second hernia operation which had been advised. Mr. Burke's pyorrhea remained untreated and his wife suspected him of trying to conceal deafness in one ear. At the age of six the twins had not been vaccinated.

Sometimes the reasons for this behavior seemed apparent and at other times they did not. It was clear, however, that the health needs of the family did not have the same high priority as the need for food.

**Mrs. B. on having a baby:**

I told my mother I am pregnant and that I feel like taking a bottle of quinine. My mother said if I take a bottle of quinine the pills might kill me.

My doctor told me when I had my seventh child I should have gotten myself fixed up so I would not have any more children.

I told him I did not want to get fixed up because I didn't think anybody would have more children at my age. I did not know that people had children after they were forty years old or more.

I hope I don't have twins this time. If I do, I don't know where I will put them. Even though this baby has been coming a long time I have not had money to buy even one piece of clothes for the baby.

\* \* \*

This being pregnant is getting me down. It seems like I have been carrying this baby inside me for two years. . . . I ain't been to the clinic but once with this baby. . . .

I did not go to the clinic at all with my last baby. . . . I went to the clinic when I was carrying the other children but I ain't had it bad like this before. . . . Maybe it's because I'm over forty.

\* \* \*

I hope this baby will be a girl. I just don't want no more boys to go in the Army.

\* \* \*

While I was in the hospital the doctor wanted to tie my tubes off so I wouldn't have any more babies. I wanted to have my tubes tied off but my husband would not sign the papers. . . .

The doctor said that he thinks my husband is afraid that he won't get no more satisfaction from—you know—our relations at night. . . . He explained to my husband but my husband kept saying 'No.'

My husband says that if you are supposed to have children just go on and have them. I don't see it that way. I think we have enough children.

**Lack of baby-sitters and money for carfare and fees:**

I have been sitting here wondering who I could get to help me take the children to the clinic. . . .

Frances is not able to help me. She has the awfulest cold. My mother could not get over here if I phoned her because there is no way that she could get over here. My brother can't get his driver's license until he gets some insurance. If Evelyn helped me, I would need somebody to stay with these other children while we took these two little ones to the clinic.

\* \* \*

I took Elsie down there to \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital three times and each time they told me not to come back again unless I had the money to pay them.

After sitting there all day and because they gave me such a hard way to go talking so much about nothing else but money, I just didn't ask them where I could take the children to get them treated free. . . .

I have been to the city hospital but that hospital is very far out and I don't have car tokens to even take the children there.

**Health delinquents:**

I was very sick Saturday night. I had chills and fever and an awful headache. I ached all over. I just don't know what the trouble is.

All of the children are coughing way down deep in their throats too. . . . I guess we all have a very bad cold. . . .

Now here I am catching this cold. . . . My feet are swollen and I could not wear that one pair of shoes what has heels on them. So I just went out in the street in these bedroom slippers and my feet got wet.

\* \* \*

The children's health is okay but they all have bad feet. The public health nurse was here and told me to have the children's feet looked after. I am going to do that.

The nurse wanted me to have his [son, age 1] hernia operated on before Christmas but I decided that I want to wait until after I go to the hospital and get out [three months hence].

\* \* \*

My mother [Mrs. Nevins] is very sick. She had a blood sugar of 200. They took her to the hospital the other day but the hospital wouldn't keep her. The visiting nurse went to see her yesterday.

\* \* \*

I have these dizzy spells. I went to the doctor the other day and he told me my pressure was very high. He said I am worrying too much. I don't see how I can stop worrying so much because I have so much on my mind.

**Family and personal tragedies:** Not all of the troubles of the Burkes were financial or marital or involved child rearing problems. A series of personal tragedies had occurred over a period of years in their families. These had left their marks in doubts, resentments, and in affirmations of faith in life. They mirror some of the exposure, the content of memories, and the vulnerability of members of some low income families.

Twenty-two years ago one of Mrs. Burke's sisters was murdered "back home."

The coroner said my sister's body showed that she had been hit on the head with an axe or a hammer. Her skull was all broken in. She had also been stuck in the face with an ice-pick. . . . When you pulled her stocking



cap apart there was some of my sister's brains all stuck around the stocking cap.

It was awful. I have never been the same since. I think my high blood pressure started then. My mother also began to have heart trouble after that. . . .

It took about one year before my mother could eat right. . . . She used to just sit down and cry almost every night. . . .

They never found out who did that terrible thing.

Mrs. Burke's father died in a mental hospital at the age of 57; before he was institutionalized the family had tried to care for him at home.

My mother had a hard time with him. . . . He was especially fond of my feeble-minded brother but when he would go off in those spells, he would beat my brother.

My mother and us would have to stop him from killing my brother. . . .

My father was standing over my mother with an axe one night when she was asleep. They called a doctor and he sent my father to the hospital because the doctor said my father's mind was gone.

My father was found dead in the hospital and he had burns and cuts on his arms. The hospital people said that he had gotten to the place where he would fight and so they had to beat him, but they don't know how he got the burns on his body.

Here is an account of the loss of a child:

I had another child who was born dead in the hospital in 1947. They said she was born dead but I don't believe it because when I was on the table having her, when part of her body was already out, the doctor put his hand on her body and pulled real hard.

I heard something crack and I think it was her neck.

I think he broke her neck when he was trying to get her out of my body.

The doctor said he would tell me what did happen and why she was born dead. But he never did tell me a single thing.

People told me I should have sued the hospital.

Mr. Burke's youngest brother was electrocuted at the age of 22. He was convicted of participating in an \$81.00 robbery during which the victim was killed. Mrs. Burke was uncertain as to whether there had been a miscarriage of justice:



He had always been a good boy and he did not have no police record and he had never been in trouble with nobody before.

He never drank but one day he lost his job. . . . A guy told him to come to his house and drink some wine and he would feel better. That guy said my brother and him drank two quarts of bad wine. . . .

To the very end he said he was innocent and that if he really did have a part in it, it was because that guy had encouraged him to drink wine and he had never had a drink before in his life. If he did have any part in the murder it was because that wine had set him crazy. Other times he said that he did not drink the wine. So I just don't know. . . . He began to say that there just could not be a God if people had to be electrocuted for something somebody else did and blamed them for it. . . .

But I feel that since he had to die it was God's will. . . .

Those people who say there ain't no God, just ain't going to make it out here in this world.

A first cousin of Mrs. Burke had been arraigned on rape charges three times:

He was sentenced to die in the electric chair because a woman had accused him of raping her. . . . He did not go to the electric chair because they waited too long to bring his case for trial. . . .

The white woman said she was not sure but my cousin looked like the man who did it. The woman's husband butt in and said 'Yes, that's the man. You know that's the man. . . .'

What I think is that she had accused my cousin because he had been up here just one week from South Carolina.

He had a Southern accent and was living with his brother who worked as the janitor in the apartment house where the woman lived. . . .

After they let him out a colored woman was raped and they accused my cousin of raping her too so they took him back to prison. Then the court released him again when he proved he was at home the time the woman said she was raped. . . .

He went to Jersey to live with my aunt and now the cops up there have him in prison again saying he raped another woman. . . . He and my aunt are very upset because my aunt knows that he was home all night that night. . . .

What I think is that some of the cops and some of the people in the court are mad because the court released

my cousin instead of electrocuting him when the first woman accused him of raping her. So now every time a woman says somebody had raped her and my cousin is any place near he gets accused of doing the raping.

During the period of our field contacts with Mrs. Burke's family, a 27-year-old nephew whom Mrs. Burke had raised from birth until the age of 13 was shot in the back. The man who shot her nephew apparently resented being greeted with a slap on the back by the nephew, even though it was supposedly a playful gesture. As the nephew left the restaurant in which the incident had occurred, the man followed and shot him. Later he protested that he had not meant to kill him.

Mrs. Burke's oldest son Donald returned from the Army for the funeral because he and his cousin were quite close. Mrs. Burke expressed her fears about the future of her four-year-old great nephew who said at the graveside:

Now they done put my daddy in a hole in the ground. That man killed my daddy and when I grow up I'm going to kill that man.

Mrs. Burke and her son Donald came to the conclusion that a six-year reenlistment in the Army was Donald's "way out" of the dilemmas and threats of his and his family's situation.

And what "way out" is there for Mrs. Burke? We have no answer, but Mrs. Burke's response to the field worker's visits and sympathetic listening may provide a small clue, as well as a testament:

I do try and I will keep on trying to do my best. I tell you, though, you help me to try. It gives me more courage when I talk to you.

## Third Generation

*My son was home from the Army for Christmas. He says he sure does like being in the Army because he don't have to worry about paying no rent or getting his food. . . .*

Two members of the third generation of the Burke family were already married or contemplating marriage when we knew them. They are among the young urban poor, born and bred in the city.

**Frances.** At the beginning of our field observations Frances was already married to the father of her one-year-old son and was then eight months pregnant with a second child. She was back in her parents' home without her husband.

Mrs. Burke, who had hoped to see her daughter spared of a marital experience like hers, reported regularly on the events in Frances' life. To Frances, she said:

You see what kind of man I got? Don't you get tangled up with no man like this. Try to get someone who can help you be happy in your home. If a man drinks and you know he is going to spend his money for whiskey, don't marry that kind of man.

### **First mistake—pregnancy:**

It made me feel awful about her. She was the pick of the family. . . .

After she met Howard he would persuade her to stay out of school. . . . I didn't know this until Frances got pregnant. The teachers used to send me notes but Frances did not give me the notes. She was pregnant before I knowed anything about her being pregnant or anything about Howard. . . .

I dreamed about her being pregnant. . . . I told my mother but Frances told her she was not pregnant. . . .

I said to Frances, 'You ain't got nothing to worry that much about. Please tell me if you are pregnant. You are not the first one to have a baby.'

I also made the mistake and had my oldest son before I was married, so I could understand. . . .

She thought I was going to put her out and said to me, 'Mama, what are you going to do to me?'

Daddy said he was going to put her out. I told him she ain't the first one who ever made a mistake like that and I was going to let her stay right here with me. I told Frances we would take care of her through this first one, but no more babies before she was married.

**Unmarried father:**

I asked her if she knowed who the man was and she told me that she did not fool around with but one man and that was Howard. I called him up and he said to me, 'Yes, Mrs. Burke, the baby is mine.'

He was nice. He used to come over and at Christmas time he brought a big 23 lb. turkey and a lot of other things. . . . Then he changed. . . .

He never came to see her when the first baby was born. I asked him what was the matter and he never gave any reason just to say that he doesn't like boy babies and he was sorry that it was a boy baby.

I told him 'If you don't send some money over here to take care of the baby, I'm going to send the police after you.'

Then he came. After he saw the baby was when he decided that he wanted to marry Frances.

**Decision of the mother:**

It was hard for me to give Frances up because she always helped me out in the house. . . . I just had to let them get married because Howard got so desperate he kept on begging me like. . . .

I talked it over and Howard said that he would take good care of her and would bring money home so she could take care of the baby and the house.

They married in December 1959. . . .

**Second pregnancy:**

To tell you the truth, I thought their marriage was going along fine. He didn't seem to change his attitude until he found out she was pregnant the second time. . . .

What happened was that he came over here to see me and told me to let my daughter stay with me for a while until after the baby was born. . . . He said he was afraid of her being in the house and going up and down the steps. He was afraid that she might fall or something and he thought she would be better off with me. He said he would pay for her care. . . .

Now almost two weeks have gone and he haven't come back yet. Yesterday when I went to the store a lady told me my daughter's husband was going around telling people he and my daughter had separated. . . .

I didn't tell her nothing except that my daughter was expecting her baby and maybe it was best to be here with me. I didn't want that lady to know my business. I certainly did not want her to know that my daughter's husband had left her like he did.

**Default in support:**

It seems like he forced her to come here and she did not want to come here. She said when he told her he would go back with his father until she is able to come back home after the baby is born, she really did not think he meant it. . . .

She just sits in a very quiet way and she don't know what to do.

She told my sister that her husband comes here every night to see her . . . because she is ashamed of what her husband has done to her and she does not want people to know about it. . . .

She was trying to find him so she called his father. His father told her Howard was not there and that he did not know where Howard was.

Then she called Howard's job and they told her he had gotten his check on Wednesday and they could not locate him at that time. . . . But I think he lost his job. . . .

Frances' husband called me. . . . I told him plenty. . . . He told me he did not work last week so he didn't have any money to bring Frances and he was ashamed to come and tell her that he didn't have any money. That's why he didn't come.

I asked him if he didn't think it was his business to know how his wife and child was going to get some food.

He said he knows it's his business but he just didn't have any money and didn't know anything else to do.

He said he was gone back to work now and would come over and bring some money. I told him that if he did not bring some money I was going to turn him into the policemen.

\* \* \*

Frances' husband was over here last night. . . . I asked him when he first came in if he wanted to see me and he said, 'No, I'm not working now and I can't support them. . . .'

Howard and my husband got into an argument. . . . My husband told him that if he couldn't have gone back on his old job, he could have gone on another job. Howard said he just thought we could take care of them for two weeks.

Now this is three weeks and that husband of Frances ain't give me nary a penny in all these three weeks. . . .

**Fourth generation:**

Frances is home but her new baby could not come home from the hospital because it is yellow. I don't know what is the matter with the baby but they kept the baby and will tell her when she can come get the baby. . . .

Frances' husband was here. He said he was glad the baby is a girl baby. He wanted a girl baby. I don't know why, but like I told you before, if this baby had been a boy baby he would not have wanted it at all.

**Money coming in:**

Last week Frances' husband was here. I showed him my gas and light bills and I told him they were going to cut the lights off. . . . He paid the bills for me. I think he gave Frances a few dollars too.

He told me he is going to try to get a place for them to live. He now had another job. He says its a good job but I don't know what kind of job it is.

**Another start:**

Oh, let me tell you about Frances! She is doing fine with her new baby. She likes her new place where she is living up on \_\_\_\_\_ Street. She said, 'Mama, this is a nice place I have up here to live now. I want you to come up and see my place.'

I would like very much to go up there and see the place but right now I ain't got no money to go up there with.

\* \* \*

Frances and her husband has a car now. They are real happy. The car did not cost but ten hundred dollars and has 2,000 miles on it. They say it is a good car . . . a '57 something.

Frances' husband says that he can pay for the car in about three months. He is really happy with it.

**Donald.** While Mrs. Burke did much complaining about Donald's inability to send her an allotment, she was not unmindful of the way he was responding to Army life nor of his desires and wishes for the future. At the end of our contact he was considering marriage to a girl whom his mother knew and to whom she had "no objections."

**On Donald's Army life:**

In 1956 he wanted to volunteer for the Army and he begged me to let him go in. I did not want him to go in. He worried me so much that I just screamed at him once and then he said, 'Okay, I'll wait. . . . I'll stay on and help you out. . . .'

Donald always told me he would never get married as long as I am living. . . . I told him he should get married to a good wife but he told me 'No.' He wanted to help me out and he would not get married for that reason. . . .

He wanted to go into the Army because he said it would be better for him and he could learn more and he could still do something for me and the family. . . .

He was awful happy. He had gotten his hair cut short and he had fixed himself up to go down to take his physical examination. . . . He said, 'If I don't pass the physical I don't know what I will do.'

I had a letter from Donald on Thursday. He writes to me a whole lot. He tells me not to worry about him. He tells me

that he goes to church and he is trying to do a good job there in the Army. . . .

I still miss him but I am getting used to him being in the Army. He lets me know where he is stationed and what he is doing and how much he likes it. So I don't feel as bad as I did about him being in the Army.

My son was home from the Army for Christmas. He says he sure does like being in the Army because he don't have to worry about paying no rent or getting his food. He says he goes to bed at ten every night and gets a lot of rest and really feels good too.

The Army people say that they like him a lot and they are going to give him a desk job. He had some trouble with his foot and a desk job would help him not have to be on his feet so much. He likes being in the Army so much that he says he hopes to make a career out of it.

You know my son is really proud of being in the Army. He says it makes him feel more like a grown-up man.

**Mrs. Burke to her son, Donald:**

Go ahead and marry her if you want to. This is your life and you should live it as you think and see that you should.



## Appendices PRECEDING PAGE BLANK-NOT FILMED

*The Burke family is one of the 39 selected for family ratings from among the many low income persons and families with whom CRS staff had significant contact. These ratings are in 19 major categories involving or affecting child rearing functions. There is a possible total of 3,500 rated items per family with each item given three parallel ratings of "reported," "observed," and "inferred." The ratings for each of these families have been IBM machine processed.*

*Ratings for Mrs. Burke in 13 selected categories and the definitions on which these ratings are based are given below. Their distribution suggests that Mrs. Burke's overall child rearing performance is rated relatively low when judged according to these criteria.*

*Suffice it to say here that this kind of quantitative analysis cannot catch all the nuances of CRS' materials; it is not intended to. We see these ratings as supplementary to our qualitative analysis of the field materials.*

### Exhibit A

#### "REPORTED" RATINGS FOR MOTHER IN TEN SELECTED CATEGORIES

<u>Category</u>	<u>Ratings</u>				
	A	B	C	D	E
Personality				X	
Self-esteem				X	
Self-appraisal				X	
Marital relations				X	
Relations with children			X		
Satisfaction with child rearing role				X	
Satisfaction with present life position of children					X
Responsibility for child care	X				
Regard for children				X	
Emotional response to children			X		

## Exhibit B

### CRITERIA USED IN RATING CHILD REARING AGENTS IN TEN SELECTED CATEGORIES

<u>Category</u>	<u>Criteria for Ratings</u>
Personality	"Independent behavior"; ability to deal with problems with feeling and directness; competence and comfort in child rearing and domestic role.
Self-esteem	Extent to which there is a positive view of self; clues obtained from perception of differences from others, admission to shortcomings, denial of strong points.
Self-appraisal	Direct and indirect indications of self-ratings of abilities and performances in child-rearing roles.
Marital relations	Respect for and enjoyment of each other; having stakes in family roles and appreciation of each other's performance; communality of interests; protection of children from conflicts on child-rearing matters.
Relations with children	Affection for and pride in children; absence of excessive demands on them for affection, companionship, etc.; pleasure at their ability to have close relations with others; ability to set limits and handle discipline without discomfort; desire to see children develop uniquely and supportive to their growth.
Satisfaction with child rearing role	Contentment and pleasure; gratification and reward, expressed and received; fulfillment of self.
Satisfaction with present life position of children	Present position and circumstances of children in relation to what would like or expect for children.
Responsibility for child care	Actual assumption of, acceptance of, carrying out the physical duties of tasks directly related to care and upbringing of children.

Regard for children

Respect, for consideration of children as individuals; appreciation of worth.

Emotional response to children

Indications of feeling tones and behavior that reveal or suggest warmth, affection, sharing of intimacy, pleasure; giving and acceptance of affection in relation to children.

